

**MINUTES**  
**MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING**  
**June 29, 2011, 10:00 AM**  
**MHS Interim Director's Office, Helena, Montana**

**Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members present:** Jim Murry, Steve Lozar, Bob Brown, Lee Rostad, Jim Court, Crystal Wong Shors and Ed Smith

**MHS Board of Trustee Members on Telephone Conference:** Thomas Nygard, Janene Caywood, Shirley Groff, Sharon Lincoln and Kent Kleinkopf

**MHS Board of Trustee Members excused:** Jim Utterback, Steve Carney and John Lepley

**Staff present:** MHS Interim, Director Mike Cooney; MHS Administrative Assistant, Renee Podell; MHS Centralized Services Program Administrator, Denise King.

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Jim Murry called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Steve Lozar led the Board in prayer. President Murry explained that the purpose of this special Board meeting was to discuss administrative issues.

**ADMINISTRATIVE DISCUSSION**

Mike Cooney stated that he has been interim director for the Montana Historical Society for nine months. He originally offered to take on the interim position for six months in order to see MHS through the Legislative process during the last Legislature. Mike announced that he will be returning to his position at the Department of Labor and would like to do so by August 1st. He asked the Board to move forward with the hiring process for the new director of the Montana Historical Society. If the process runs past August 1<sup>st</sup> he has offered to stay a little longer. Mike emphasized that MHS is an incredible operation and that it has an incredible staff of people. Mike met with the MHS staff before coming to the Board meeting.

President Murry thanked Mike Cooney for his work at the Society stating that he has been a catalyst to bringing everything together and has done a marvelous job.

Steve Lozar thanked Mike for helping with this assignment. He stated that Mike has given the MHS nine months of a good foundation and believes he has brought healing to the staff. Mike has forged a unique and good place here.

Mike Cooney noted that the job description for the director's position has been updated. The job description needs to be posted on the State website within the next day or so. Mike stated he knows there are people waiting to see if the position opens and he knows there will be a good response.

President Murry has requested an extensive search be conducted for the new Director of the Montana Historical Society. The position will be posted on the State website for 21 days. President Murry will extend an invitation to the Governors' office to participate on the hiring panel for the selection of the next Director. Denise presented a copy of a press release prepared by MHS Public Relations employee Tom Cook (made a permanent part of this record). She also presented a copy of the job description for the director's position (made a permanent part of this record).

Ed Smith gave the Board a copy of a Court Administrator's position at the Montana Supreme Court (made a permanent part of this record). He presented this announcement as an example of what other agencies require to be attached to the resume. It was agreed that letters of interest should be attached.

Discussion was held on the application process.

#### **MOTION**

**Ed Smith moved to post the Director's Position Job Announcement on the State website for 30 days.** Discussion was held on the timeline. Mike Cooney said he could possibly stay a little longer, if need be, until a new director is hired. He also stated that leaving the position open for 21 days gives the Board the opportunity to review applications while they are all together for the July 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting. **Sharon Lincoln made a substitute motion to amend the motion to 21 days rather than 30 days. Bob Brown seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.** President Murry noted that once the 21 days has been reached the Board can extend the announcement for a longer period if need be.

Denise King discussed the salary range in order to put this information on the job announcement. She stated the salary range is currently \$87,500 - \$92,303. Mike Cooney asked the Board to determine what information will be required by the applicants. Mike also suggested the Board decide if a completed State of Montana Job application would be required. Crystal Wong Shors commented that she doesn't want to see the Board require a State of Montana application.-She stressed the need for a short essay on the applicant's sense of what the Historical Society is. Leadership is one of the most important things the Board needs to look at.

#### **MOTION**

**Crystal Wong Shors moved to set the salary level for the MHS Director's position at \$87,500 - \$92,303. The applicant must submit a letter of interest, a complete resume, three references and a written response to a supplemental question. Sharon Lincoln seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

Discussion was held on the wording for the supplemental question. Crystal Wong Shors stated it will be important for the Board to determine the kind of leadership the applicant will be bringing to this position. She noted it will be easier if a committee is selected by the Board to begin the

first phase of the selection process. The committee determines what the supplemental question will be.

Kent Kleinkopf commented that Mike Cooney is the Board's model for the ideal candidate. It should be a simple manner to list his attributes and then incorporate them into the question.

Janene Caywood stated the Board isn't looking just at experience but at the applicant's philosophy.

Ed Smith said we need to ask the applicant what their vision is for the director's position and for the Historical Society.

President Murry noted that it is his intent to wait on a decision of selecting a review committee until the upcoming July Board meeting when Steve Lozar will take over as President of the Board.

Mike Cooney remarked that he would like to make sure the Board members receive copies of applications as they come in. Denise reminded the Board members that this process is confidential so names of applicants should not be given out.

Lee Rostad relayed a comment from Bob Morgan stating that Bob thinks the Board should only hire directors from the State of Montana. Steve Lozar noted that it is pretty tough to get the love of Montana without living here in Montana.

The Board members agreed that the supplemental question answer should be 500 or less words.

Discussion took place on mailing a hard copy every Friday to all Board members of applications received during that week.

Mike Cooney discussed the staff's comments with the Board. Mike stated he told the staff that the Board would be focused on finding a director who had good people skills and one that would take the time to learn what goes on in the different programs by visiting those employees and their work areas.

Steve Lozar encouraged any members of the MHS staff who want to be considered for the director's position to turn in an application.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Special Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.